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ABSTRACT

The aim of this paper is twofold: (1) to examine the process of transformation of education in the Czech Republic since the Velvet Revolution of 1989; and (2) to examine this experience within the framework of the educational change and reform literature, especially the work of Michael Fullan, to determine its utility within a Central European setting and under a condition of rapid political change. The Czech experience of "sudden change" presents a unique opportunity to study the educational change process, particularly as it has been defined and understood by scholars such as S. Sarason and M. Fullan. A three-member research team visited the Czech Republic in May 1995. The team interviewed 22 key individuals in Prague, including senior members of the Ministry of Education, educators from British and U.S. organizations, teacher educators, university researchers, members of advocacy and school reform organizations. The team also visited teachers, school administrators, parents, and students from one state and two private schools. Interview transcripts, notes, and documents were analyzed in order to develop a description of the Czech experience of educational transformation and to assess the extent to which, in several areas, the transformation has occurred. In response to the question posed in the title of this paper, yes, a North American model of educational change can be applied to the Czech experience. This paper also concluded that modifications could be made to Fullan's model of factors affecting initiation of change in the educational transformation in the Czech Republic since the Velvet Revolution of 1989. The paper suggests examining the extent to which changes in the educational system have been implemented and sustained, and also using this model to view the cases of other Central and Eastern European countries. Finally, comparisons among other countries that undergo large-scale societal change through political unrest or peaceful democratization also need to be made. A figure illustrates Fullan's factors associated with initiation. Contains 20 references. (LAP)

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EDUCATIONAL TRANSFORMATION IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC SINCE 1989: CAN A NORTH AMERICAN MODEL OF EDUCATIONAL CHANGE BE APPLIED?

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INTRODUCTION

The Czech experience, a case of "sudden change", presents a unique opportunity to study the educational change process, particularly as has been defined and understood by scholars such as Sarason (1976, 1990) and Fullan (1991). The fact that the phenomenon of educational transformation has been experienced within a more compressed time frame in Central Europe, suggests that the Czech experience provides a suitable "laboratory" for the investigation of educational change that is different than that experienced in North America where change occurs within a relatively stable societal context.

The aim of this paper is twofold: (a) to examine the process of transformation of education in the Czech Republic since the Velvet Revolution of 1989; and (b) to examine this experience within the framework of the educational change and reform literature, particularly the work of Fullan, to determine its utility within a central European setting and under a condition of rapid political change.

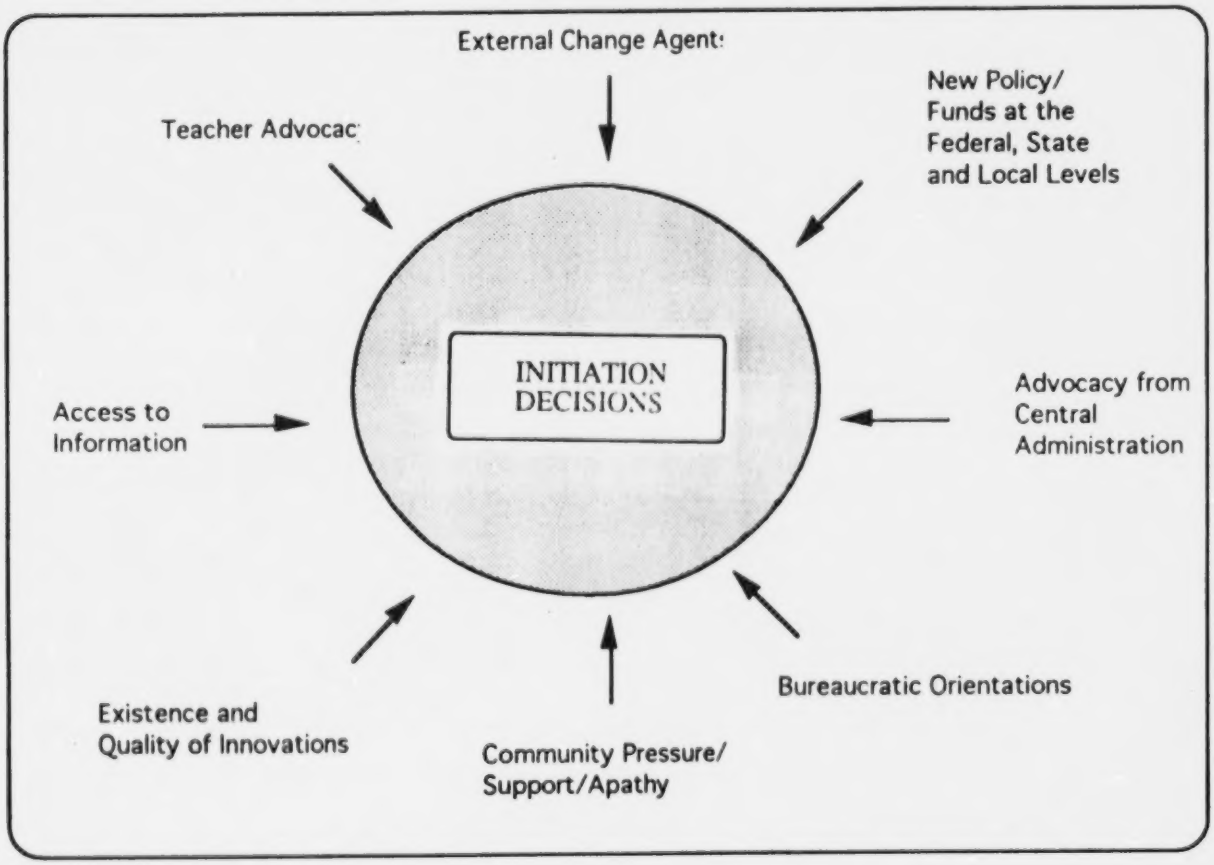
The starting point for this investigation was provided by Prucha (1992) who identifies several major social, political and educational changes which had occurred in that country since the Velvet Revolution of 1989: (a) political independence of education (change from totalitarian regime to no political governance in education; (b) change from Marxist doctrine to philosophical and ideological pluralism in education; (c) introduction of school alternatives through privatization; (d) decentralization of education; (e) change from political criteria, e.g., party membership for educational access, to criteria related to achievement and ability; (f) change from Russian to English as a first foreign language; and (g) curricular reformation. These areas formed the framework and background for the researchers' initial thinking about events in the Czech Republic, particularly as they related to the educational system. Pruha's paper, however, while informative about the broad nature of political, social and educational changes that had occurred at the societal level, does not address the process of change as events unfolded. Fullan, on the other hand, focuses both on the "what" of educational change as well as the "how" of the change process (Fullan, 1991).

One of the tenets central to Fullan's understanding of educational change is that "change is a process, not an event" (1991, p. 49). Most researchers, he notes, acknowledge three broad phases to the process: initiation, implementation, and continuation. Phase one, initiation, "consists of the process that leads up to and includes a decision to adopt or proceed with a change." The implementation phase, two to three years in length, involves the "first experience of attempting to put an idea or reform into practice." Institutionalization refers to whether the change gets built in as an ongoing part of the system or disappears by way of a decision to discard or through attrition" (1991, pp. 47-48). The present study focused its data collection primarily upon the events and process immediately following the Velvet Revolution. It is for this reason that the discussion will confine itself almost exclusively to an examination of the initiation phase of educational transformation in the Czech Republic.

Fullan notes that there are an infinite range of variables involved in determining whether a change program gets initiated. In his discussion, he concentrates on the factors associated with "planned or action-oriented change" (1991, p. 50) (See Figure 1). He identifies the following eight sources, taken from the literature, which affect initiation: (a) external change agents; (b) new policy--funds (federal/state/local); (c) advocacy from central administration; (d) problem-solving and bureaucratic orientations; (e) community pressure/support/apathy; (f) existence and quality of innovations; (g) access

to information; and (h) teacher advocacy. Fullan suggests that change is initiated from a variety and combination of sources (1991, p. 61), implying there is no obvious order to these factors. The following case study addresses the utility of each of these factors for understanding particularly the initiation phase of educational transformation in the Czech Republic. A discussion of some of the limitations of Fullan's model for understanding the Czech experience follows a description of the case.

Figure 1. Factors Associated with Inititiation



Source: Adapted from Fullan, M. (1991). *The New Meaning of Educational Change.* Toronto: OISE Press, p. 50

METHOD

A three-member research team visited the Czech Republic in May, 1995. Lengthy interviews were conducted with 22 key individuals, including senior members of the Ministry of Education, educators from British and American organizations, teacher educators, university researchers, and members of advocacy and school reform organizations. The research team also visited one state and two private schools where they spoke with teachers, school administrators, parents and students. Interviewees were selected because of their role within the educational system and its transformation.

The variety of participants interviewed was deliberate in accordance with Fullan's concept of "shared meaning of change". Fullan proceeds from a phenomenological basis to explain the social reality of change, to explain why change works as it does. Central to his concept of educational change is the problem of meaning and he argues it is important to understand both the small picture, "the subjective meaning or lack of meaning for individuals at all levels of the educational system" and the larger picture, "the sociopolitical process" (1991, p. 4).

The data collection was enriched considerably when a number of the interviewees contributed important primary documents related to the process of educational transformation. These documents described selected innovative programs, provided statistical data on various aspects of the educational system, and described legislative changes that have been introduced in the Czech Republic since 1989.

The authors recognize that the study is based on a restricted period of time and number of interviewees. It is also based on the researcher's perspective and interpretation of events and literature. The sample was broadly based, but by necessity limited geographically to Prague. Thus although it represents an exploratory study, the researchers collected a wealth of information and met many informed, key individuals in the short time available.

Analyses of the data took the form of examining the transcriptions of the taped interviews as well as the extensive notes and documents acquired by the research team. The data were organized and analyzed in order to develop a description of the Czech experiences as a "case" of educational transformation and to assess the extent to which there has been transformation in a number of areas. The data were then matched against models and elements of educational change, identified by Fullan, in order to understand the transformation as a "change" process. This paper, however, represents an initial examination of the data within the context of the educational change literature. There are many layers of data yet to be understood.

THE CONTEXT

Education in the Czech Republic before 1989

The Czech Republic is a country with a long tradition of national pride and a history of educational excellence coupled with a predisposition to educational reform. In 1918 Czech independencewas achieved with the creation of the First Czechoslovak Republic (1918-1939), a proud moment in the history of a people who value freedom and the right to self-determination. During this

period the educational system was internationally recognized, the product of decades of scholarly writings (e.g., Comenius, Jan Hus), reform-oriented perspectives and solutions to educational problems, all grounded in a distinguished educational tradition and an exposure to the influences of both European and North American thought.

The First Republic came to an end with the events that led up to World War II, and following a period of political difficulty, a constitutional coup d'état resulted in the country entering a long period of communist rule (1948-1989). The educational system became overlaid with the beliefs of a foreign ideology, Marxist-Leninism, which promoted uniformity at the expense of individual development. The application of this doctrine affected the educational system in other ways as well. The educational system became uniform, the curriculum was infused with the Marxist-Leninist ideology, access to higher education was politically based, and professional isolation was the experience of most educators at all levels of the system (Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports of the Czech Republic, 1994; Rydl, 1995) Parents, fearful of spoiling their children's educational and hence occupational chances, generally, neither openly challenged nor participated in the formal educational process. What many did do, however, within the secrecy of their homes, was to pass along to their children the cultural values and historical perspective of the days of the First Republic (Pilatova, 1995). This practice increased following the Prague Spring of 1968, after the Soviet invasion, which served to disillusion many who had been prepared to give communism a chance.

The Velvet Revolution in November, 1989

1989 was a year of tremendous unrest and change as the phenomenon of glasnost brought political change to Central and Eastern Europe. By November 1989, the popular movement for democracy had overturned the communist government in Czechoslovakia and The Velvet Revolution was well underway. The first post-'89 government was almost exclusively made up of the leaders of the dissident opposition: writers, economists, political scientists, and lawyers. The first president of the new republic, Vaclav Havel, was a poet and playwright. The Velvet Revolution changed the political, economic and social direction of Czechoslovakia. The country experienced a radical political shift "which replaced the totalitarian regime with a democratic and pluralistic social system", followed in short order by "some fundamental changes in the political and economic sphere" (Prucha, 1992, p. 38). Essentially, the major changes were the following: (a) The constitution of Czechoslovakia was modified to ensure legislatively the social order, expunging the influence of the party and the spirit of Marxist-Leninism from its position of power and control in all spheres of Czech society; (b) a pluralistic parliamentary system was restored and; (c) major changes to the economic system, moving from a centrally-planned economy based strictly on state ownership to a free-market economy highlighting privatization of state-run enterprises, free prices and competition, and foreign capital investments were introduced.

These political and economic changes resulted from a major shift in the societal values which emerged from the opportunity provided by the withdrawal of the Russian influence. This value shift, however, was experienced in other societal institutions as well. In November 1989 the educational system was still characterized by policies reflecting the values of the Marxist-Leninist ideology and a totalitarian approach which largely negated individual rights and differences and institutionalized the concept of "planning " at all levels of the society. The events of late 1989 set the scene for a major contradiction within the educational system. Educational changes in the form of new legislation were thus initiated to bring greater coherence between societal values expressed in the new political and economic legislation and those reflected in the structure of the educational system.

THE CASE

External Change Agents

In the case of the Czech experience perhaps the most logical place to begin in order to understand the process of change is with some understanding of the external change agents. In the case of the Czech Republic, educational change was not simply an innovation or project being introduced at some local level. Fullan classifies them as regional, state or national roles, external to the district (p.56). In this sense, an examination of the external change agents as a factor affecting initiation in the Czech experience is potentially problematic since the unit of analysis for educational transformation in the Czech Republic is at the national level, at least for the original impetus for change.

At the societal level, several groups of external change agents can be identified in the Czech experience. One could perhaps build the argument that an external event, glasnost, enabled the emergence of internal change agents in the form of legislators to initiate change. What glasnost had begun, the Velvet Revolution accelerated and increased contact with rest of the world brought many external change agents: There was an influx of Westerners and an increase in the activities of western organizations (Kalous, 1995). For example, funding for educational projects and human resources was provided by PHARE (European Union Program), the Soros Foundation, The British Council, the American Information Agency, MENT (Man, Education and New Technologies), Education for Democracy and the Peace Corps (Griffiths, 1995; Perclova, 1995). Secondly, there were increased opportunities for contact with western European countries through teacher and student exchanges, conference and professional development opportunities in other countries. These held the potential for change or transformation at the classroom level (Rydl, 1995). There was also increased access and attention to scholarly literature from around the world by university and other scholars who had the potential to work for change through teaching and the development of reform proposals (Spilkova, 1995).

Although the external change agents were noted, documented, and acknowledged by many interviewees in the Czech Republic, it is interesting that a significant group of interviewees did not perceive them as shaping the nature of the changes that occurred. This view that change had come from internal sources emerged in relation to both legislative changes from the top as well as changes initiated by individual teachers and parents, at the grass roots level.

New Policy--Funds

Fullan acknowledges the important role that the various levels of government can take in initiating major educational change through legislative action. New policies, he notes, "especially if accompanied by funds, stimulate and sometimes require initiation of change at the local level" (1991, p. 58).

It has already been noted that subsequent to the Velvet Revolution new political and economic legislation was quickly enacted which set the stage for major changes in the Czech educational system. In some cases educational change was mandated by the legislation while other legislation enabled change to occur as a consequence. The major policy changes include the following.

1. The teaching of Marxist doctrine in primary, secondary and university school curricula was abolished, inadvertently creating a vacuum of suitable instructional materials for teachers to use in history, social science civic studies (Prucha, 1995). According to some, a new ideology of democracy and tolerance has not yet taken its place (NEMES, 1995).

2. *The Proposal for the Innovation of Act No. 29, 1984, of the System of Basic and Secondary Schools, 1990* allowed for the creation of private and religious schools funded from state resources. It has been suggested that these private schools served as a catalyst for change in the state schools (Rydl, 1995; Prucha & Walterová, 1992). Although private schools have been in existence for five years, no data currently exist on how they function or how effective they are.

3. *The Act of the Czech National Council on the State Administration of Education and School-Based Management* introduced decentralization in the school system. Decision-making had been centralized in the hands of the Ministry but the new act gave more responsibility to teachers, principals, and local authorities (Prucha & Walterová, 1992).

4. *The Act on Higher Education* and other legislation accorded autonomy and political independence to institutions of higher education (Prucha & Walterová, 1992).

5. The teaching of Russian as a foreign language was no longer obligatory. English became the first foreign language of choice among students (Prucha, 1992).

6. In 1990 a new system of funding for schools was also introduced. Funding was shifted from a needs-based approach to normative funding where "money followed the student." Students were free to select the school they attended and as a result schools became very competitive. The system of normative funding has indirectly prompted schools to begin developing alternative curricula and unique programs to attract more students.

These policy changes constitute "change from the top" but what was noticeably absent was an encompassing vision which informed and linked these legislative initiatives (Kalous, 1995). At the same time, however, a concurrent trend was evident at the grass roots level. The newly elected government in June, 1990, recognizing that it had no expertise in educational reform solicited public participation in the development of proposals for transforming the educational system. These submissions were to serve as a basis for discussion in Parliament and for the creation of subsequent legislation. Between 1990 and 1992, 65-70 proposals were submitted by institutions, organizations, and individuals.

The proposals essentially fell into two camps. Groups such as the Ministry of Education, and the Faculty of Pedagogy, Charles University argued for maintaining the form and structure of state schools (Rydl, 1995; Prucha & Walterová, 1992). Reform groups argued for the introduction of autonomous schools, a child-centred curriculum, the humanization of education, a focus on development of critical skills and problem-solving, and diversification of curricular options. The three reform groups whose proposals were most influential were NEMES (Independent Interdisciplinary Group for the Reform of Education and School), an independent, interdisciplinary group with several hundred members including teachers, psychologists, sociologists and economists (NEMES, 1991, 1993, 1994, 1995); IDEA (Independent and Diverse Educational Alternatives), which presented a vision of a "democratic, pluralistic and open educational system" with "effective legislative and economic tools for both the transition period and the final stage" (Botlík, 1994); and PAU (Engaged/Involved Teachers Association), a group of approximately 300 teachers. These community reform groups, which typically spontaneously

formed in the first year or two following the revolution, have inspired an emerging vision through their program initiatives which have not always been embraced by the Ministry of Education.

Advocacy From Central Administration

Fullan states that "initiation of change never occurs without an advocate, and one of the most powerful is the chief district administrator" (1991, p. 54). Within the context of the Velvet Revolution it would be difficult to attribute advocacy to a single role. One could argue, however, that change was advocated for at all levels of society. According to Kalous (1995), the fall of communist rule was like "opening a prison." There was immediate national consensus that change was desirable, indeed expected, after 40 years of totalitarian rule. There was no consensus, however, regarding the direction in which the change should go. One view was to allow the free market to decide the direction of educational change while another suggested a slower, more cautious approach, allowing time for the development of a vision (Kalous, 1995). These views parallel the differences between Prime Minister Klaus, who is an economist, and President Havel, who is a poet and author. What can be said, however, is that there were advocates who not only introduced educational change at the highest level of government but who also actively moved to bring about some change, thereby lending credence to Fullan's view of the importance of senior people in the initiation of change.

Bureaucratic and Problem-Solving Orientations

This particular factor, as it is described by Fullan, speaks more to the orientation that units such as school districts bring to adoption decisions, that is decisions to introduce an innovation or change. Decision-makers may be either bureaucratic (opportunistic), using the opportunity to gain extra resources or as a symbolic act of appearing to respond to a given situation or they are problem-solvers, using the decision to solve a problem. Fullan notes that bureaucratically speaking, "the political and symbolic value of initiation of change for schools is often of greater significance than the educational merit and time and cost necessary for implementation follow-through" (1991, p. 61). Further, he argues for the importance of the symbolic value of decisions. "Such decisions may be necessary for political survival, may be needed first steps that set the preconditions for real change in practice, or may represent the only change possible in certain situations" (1991, p. 61).

There are those who take a very cynical view of the role of the government in initiating legislative changes, arguing that only what was needed to survive politically was done; that the government adopted, in the absence of any vision, a band-aid approach to educational change. Conversely, there are those who see the government and its bureaucrats as having facilitated change through the vehicle of legislative and policy changes. There is probably some truth in both views and what cannot be disputed is that decisions were taken that initiated educational change.

Community Pressure Groups

Fullan acknowledges that the role of the community in the initiation process "may be in the form of exerting pressure for a solution to a problem, opposing a potential innovation or adoption, or, doing nothing" (1991, p. 56). In the case of the Czech Republic, the community, in the form of the general populace, joined in the call for legislative reform immediately following the events of November, 1989. As has already been noted, when the Ministry of Education requested proposals on the direction the new educational system should take, 65-70 proposals were submitted. Those from NEMES, PAU and IDEA were taken most seriously. Community input was also sought in the form of proposals for experimental projects. Of the several hundred initiatives proposed, 25 were accepted. The new legislation

establishing school-based management also sought to encourage parent involvement in education through participation on the newly created school boards, but many of these boards were characterized by apathy rather than pressure for change. It was feared by some that the existence of these boards might discourage change in the classrooms in that parents would be more concerned with their children passing entrance exams to the next level of schooling than encouraging change in the classroom which might be perceived as threatening that very possibility. Thus, the situation in the Czech Republic reveals community responses that varied from group to group and from the local to the broader societal level.

Existence and Quality of Innovations/Access to Information

Interviewees identified three sources of information about innovations relevant to the Czech experience: the collective memory of the educational innovations of the First Republic (1918-1938); the current influence of innovations from North America and Europe; and the more specific programmatic innovations or proposals by local community groups (NEMES, PAU, and IDEA). Many of these community groups have members drawn from the ranks of university professors and teachers.

Fullan (1992) suggests that individuals' immediate history with change is an important consideration; however, the Czech experience suggests that we must also take into account the national consciousness. The pre-war school reform in the Czech Republic was influenced by German pedagogy, French educational psychology, and North American Progressive Education (Rydl, 1994, p. 258). In 1930, Czechoslovakia was one of the European leaders in school reform. However, this unique social movement was interrupted by World War II, revived for three years following the war, and then destroyed again by the Communist regime in 1948. Following the Velvet Revolution in 1989, new reform schools reviving those of the early 20th century began to reappear (e.g., Waldorf, Rudolf Steiner, Montessori, and Society of Friends of Jan Hus schools). These innovations, however, were rather isolated (Rydl, 1995).

Prior to 1989, innovations emanating from the West were introduced (e.g., new math in the 1970s [NEMES, 1995]; communicative English language teaching in the 1980s [Repka, 1986]), but innovations visibly connected to the West that were perceived as threatening the political ideology were summarily suppressed. After 1989, cooperative links between Czech state schools and other European and North American schools began to proliferate through teacher exchanges, student travel abroad, and increased access to Western and European literature. Such information served to influence, often in a fragmented manner, an emergent vision supported by the more reform-minded teachers (NEMES, 1995). A number of the interviewees, including faculty at Charles University, members of the community reform groups, and government officials at the Ministry of Education, had all traveled abroad and incorporated ideas from the foreign educational literature into their teaching, development of educational policy, or formulation of experimental schools such as the "Live School" developed by reformers (Cindr, Cindr, Hausenblas & Havlinova, 1995).

Teacher Advocacy

While Fullan observes that teachers as a group, particularly at the school level, have less opportunity than other educators to come into contact with new ideas and less time and energy to follow through on them, he also notes that on a more global level, "national teacher unions have lately become strong advocates of reforms" (1991, p. 55). Certainly, these observations capture the Czech situation. As noted earlier, teachers and other professional educators have combined forces to create reform groups such as NEMES, PAU and IDEA. These groups have been instrumental in creating a grass roots movement promoting a more liberalized, child-centred philosophy of education.

The majority of teachers in the Czech school system, however, are not involved in these grass roots movements. It was estimated that approximately 20% of the teachers support school reform and approximately 40% would be interested in learning about different ways of teaching, but many feel isolated, frustrated and stressed. Primary school teachers who have studied pedagogy tend to be more change-oriented than the secondary school teachers whose training is more specialized and discipline oriented. Although primary teachers are beginning to communicate with secondary teachers, many realize that they do not have a common language (NEMES, 1995). Many competent teachers have unfortunately begun to leave their positions for industry because the challenge of educational transformation is too overwhelming (Rydl, 1995).

LIMITATIONS OF FULLAN'S MODEL FOR UNDERSTANDING THE CZECH EXPERIENCE

The objective of this paper was to examine educational transformation in the Czech Republic since the Velvet Revolution from the perspective of the initiation of the change process as it was set out by Fullan (1991). Glasnost and the subsequent events had created a window of opportunity for change. However, at least three features of the Czech case set it apart from typical cases of educational change depicted by Fullan. First, (a) initiation of a process to achieve educational change in the Czech Republic occurred almost literally overnight with the enactment of significant legislation; second, (b) it was largely conducted in the absence of any established plan for initiating a desired vision or goal; and third, (c) this process began at the national level rather than at the level of the school and the school division.

This issue of rapid change at a national level is intriguing and generates the question of whether the process associated with the events in the Czech Republic can be adequately examined and understood from the vantage of an explanation of educational change such as that provided by Fullan. Changes occurred very quickly in the Czech Republic in the two years following November, 1989. There is no doubt that the Velvet Revolution constituted a watershed permitting major educational change. After 40 years of Communist indoctrination, there was an expectation and desire for change to take place quickly. Between 1990-1991, educational initiatives were easily introduced and options were flexible. Currently, however, change is more difficult. "With particular changes, especially complex ones, one must struggle through ambivalence before one is sure tht the new vision is workable and right. Good change is hard work." (Fullan, 1991, p. 73) Many individuals, organizations, and institutions no longer work cooperatively (Rydl, 1995). Each have their own vested interest, based on different philosophical orientations that have become more entrenched with time. "It is becoming increasingly difficult to agree on the basic direction that education should take .. We have lost that critical time period when we were open to change." (Rydl, 1995). The loss of this crical time period has contributed to an emerging fragmented vision of educational reform.

The loss of the critical time period may be attribted to a difference of time frame for change. Many of the individuals interviewed acknowledged that, "Change must be a gradual process and that the emphasis must be on internal transformation" (Hudcová & Nováckova, 1993, p. 5). The thrust to slow down the process may well be understood in the words of Kalous (1995), according to whom, a revolution in very simplistic terms, is characterized by three phases: the old is destroyed; one starts to reflect about what is destroyed, finally one builds what is destroyed anew. The Czech people, he believes, are still in Phase 2 of this revolutionary process.

Fullan suggests that the factors he presents in his model are associated with "planned or action-

oriented change." This comment is particularly interesting since it had the potential to discount immediately the utility of Fullan's understanding of the educational change process as it related to the Czech situation. This is so because the element of "planning" has been largely absent from their process of educational transformation in the Czech Republic. The process of educational transformation was marked by an absence of a defined vision at the level of the Ministry. What has not yet been said is that "off with the old" included a rejection of the notion of "planning." The concept of "planning" was firmly associated with the communist regime and it, along with other values and "ways of doing things" was rejected after the Velvet Revolution. It is not clear yet whether the assumption of "planning" in Fullan's work negates the utility of his understanding of the change process in relation to the Czech case. The discussion to date does not suggest this, but it may have implications for the utility of the model in an examination of the implementation phase.

The unit of analysis in Fullan's discussion of educational change is the school rather than society. That is, his model most directly speaks to educational change and innovation at the level of classrooms, schools or school districts. For example, Fullan presumes the purpose of educational change is "to help schools accomplish their goals more effectively by replacing some structures, programs and/or practices with better ones" (1991, p. 15). While this need not necessarily be construed as meaning that educational change begins at the school level as opposed to the national level, the statement does typify much of the orientation of Fullan's discussion. Conversely, that educational change occurs at the national level need not imply that the ultimate purpose is not change at the classroom, school or district level. The immediate goals and perspectives are, however, different.

Whether the unit of analysis is a school division or a nation, the personal experience of individuals at all levels of the system was a significant factor in initiating change. That the totalitarian education system had to be changed was agreed, but it was those who had experienced or observed its harmful effects personally who were often driving forces in the initiation of change. These individuals were driven by the conviction that the old system was guilty of "damaging children for life" and contained many features that had to be eradicated (NEMES, 1993).

The researchers heard accounts of personal experiences from administrators, educators, and parents of children who for different reasons, disability or giftedness, did not conform to the "norm", failing therefore to thrive under the rigid and structure of the communist system. These were the individuals who established private schools for children such as their own or worked in advocacy groups, such as the "Blue Key School" for the rights of such children to appropriate education (Cerna, 1995). These parents and educators knew, from personal experience, that the old system was particularly harmful to some children, but did not necessarily have a vision of what might be put in its place. Their drive, determination and absolute faith in their humanitarian instincts were powerful factors affecting the initiation of change

In the Czech case, many individuals played multiple roles in the initiation of the change process. For example, some of the interviewees were not only members of the Ministry of Education bureaucracy, but also members of community or advocacy groups. As a result, the importance and significance of many of the factors becomes blurred. The greater the degree of overlap among the individuals in the roles associated with initiation to change, the more confounded becomes any understanding of the process. This was in evidence in the Czech case where the participation in the process of many individuals could be understood from the vantage of several factors. One could argue that the more individuals there are who contribute to the process through more than one factor, the more chance there is that these initiating factors will result in proposals for change that will suit the different interest groups. In the Czech case the result was that there were two dominant visions of change

emerging and individuals found themselves with divided loyalties.

In answer to the question posed in the title of this paper, a North American model of educational change can be usefully applied to the Czech experience. The application, however, suggests modifications that could be made to Fullan's model of the factors affecting the initiation of change in the case of educational transformation in the Czech Republic since the Velvet Revolution of 1989. Fullan's model of the factors that affect the initiation of change do not account for aspects of the Czech case that were perceived to be very significant in initiating change. These include the notion of a window of opportunity; the internal contradictions that arose between the educational system in existence and the reactivated societal values; and the personal experiences of individuals who were subsequently motivated to bring about change.

The next step is to examine the implementation phase of the Czech experience within the parameters of Fullan's discussion of educational change. Educational change has been initiated. The next question is to what extent has change been implemented and sustained. To what extent has the educational system of the Czech Republic been transformed? The model should be examined within the context of other Central and Eastern European countries as well to identify the similarities and differences among the cases. Further, comparison needs to be made to other countries that undergo large-scale societal change through political unrest or peaceful democratization.

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